

# THE KENTUCKY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS: THE STORIES OF KENTUCKY



## WHAT'S MY STORY?

### I HELD A BIRD CRITICAL TO COAL MINERS' SAFETY.

Before the invention of instruments to detect the presence of lethal gases such as carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen and methane, coal miners carried canaries into the mines as sentinels to detect unhealthy levels of gases. Humans have a greater tolerance than the bird of harmful gases that exist underground, so if the bird's health worsened or it died, miners knew they were in danger of asphyxiation and that they should leave the mine immediately.

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